

COMMUNITY SCREENING REPORT OF EYE HEALTH
CONDUCTED IN THE LOWER RIVER REGION
BY SOMA DISTRICT HOSPITAL EYE UNIT
DECEMBER 2022 TO JANUARY 2023.



Soma District Hospital Eye Unit through the NEHP got some funding from one of the partners (an organization called CATARACT ARE CURABLE) to conduct community screening in the communities of LRR. Soma is the only health region without a General Hospital; instead the region had a Major Health Center which was upgraded to District Hospital few years back.

Upon the receiving the funds for the community screening, the Eye Health team consulted the Regional Health Directorate to officially informed them about the planned activity in the region. Upon their approval, the team conducted meetings the Alkalos, village health workers and community nurses in the communities of Lower River Region.

Secondly, the Soma community radio station was used to spread the message regarding the community screening and dates were announced as to which communities the eye health team will be visiting. The screenings were conducted in three districts of Kiang West, Kiang Central and Kiang East and also three districts of Jarra West, Central and East. In some cases, screening had to be conducted in the evening so as to catch up with those who go to the farms and women who go to their garden, now that we are in harvesting season.

The screening was done from 08:00am to 16:00pm, but in some areas, due to poor condition of the vehicle, poor road network and long distance, we had to reduce our closing time to 14:00pm because the vehicle has no headlights for night vision. In total ten (10) communities (Five districts in Kiang and Five districts in Jarra) were visited. Screening was conducted in ten different days. Over three thousand and fifty-seven (3,057) people were screened during these visits, assessing visual acuity, taking history, monitoring vital signs, blood pressure and pulse, measuring of intra ocular pressure (IOP), dilation and funduscopy. Those booked for the Cataract Camp will also be re-assessed to rule out diabetics by testing their blood sugar which will be done a day before the surgery. These investigations are important because good pre-operative assessment will also result in excellent outcomes; this will encourage more people to come forward for cataract surgical uptake. The Village Head men (Alkalos), Village Health Worker and Community Based Champions played an important role in ensuring that the community screening was a success.





Out of this figure, ninety (90) people had cataracts, but out of these, only eighty (80) were qualified to be operated in secondary eye unit, while the other remaining ten (10) were referred to the SZRECC due to complications. Fifteen (15) glaucoma cases were also seen and referred to the same hospital. The remaining patients were given medication courtesy of CAC.

CHALLENGES

The challenges we encounter during the exercise:

1. INADEQUATE STAFFING:

The unit and the region as a whole has only one prescriber and there is only one surgeon in the facility.

2. MOBILITY:

The unit vehicle really gave us tough time during the course of the exercise due to its poor conditions due to over 10 years without proper maintenance. This has made it impossible to conduct regular community screening.



3. INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Currently the only operating microscope is not functioning as expected.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. The eye unit of Soma District Hospital needs to be strengthened both in terms of human and materials resources, so that we can conduct regular community screening.
2. The management should do its utmost to provide us with a road-worthy vehicle through the help of the government.
3. There is the need for a new functional microscope for excellent surgery outcome.

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